

## Search Engine Optimization (SEO) Seminar Notes from 6/28/07

### Some Statistics

- In 2006, U.S. online retail purchases totaled \$108.7B (not including travel or things like EBay)
- 85% of website visits start with a SEARCH
- In 2006, U.S. spending on advertising broke down as:
  - \$16.8B online advertising
  - \$3.8B outdoor advertising
  - \$11B radio advertising
- As of May 2007, the most widely used Search engines were:
  - Google 56.3%
  - Yahoo 21.5%
  - MSN 8.4%
  - AOL 5.3% (powered by Google)
  - ASK 2%
  - Others 6.5%

### SEM (Search Engine Marketing) includes:

- Paid Placement – Pay-per-click (PPC) management (Google, Yahoo, MSN)
- Paid Inclusion – Yahoo is only main play that still charges just to be in the possible list of search hits
- SEO
- Utilization of new search technology
- Robust reporting

### Examples of sites who utilized SEM to make dramatic changes in their monthly hits:

- [www.jobinthesun.com](http://www.jobinthesun.com) went from 0 to 1.4 million visitors/month in 2 years
- [www.seefido.com](http://www.seefido.com) not a pretty site, but SEO optimized and makes \$100K/month
- [www.ecayonline.com](http://www.ecayonline.com) 0-280K visitors/month in 18 months
- [www.cbia.net](http://www.cbia.net) 3500-24K visitors/month
- [www.infraredconsultants.com](http://www.infraredconsultants.com)

**Google PageRank:** A score between 0 and 10 of website credibility in Google's eyes, with 10 being the best. To see your PageRank for any web page, download the free Google Toolbar at <http://toolbar.google.com> and turn on PageRank by going to Settings, then Options and click on the MORE tab. Things that can positively affect your PageRank:

- When credible sites link to you (e.g. sites with higher PageRank, sites that end in .edu or .gov), especially when they use your keywords to link to you rather than a straight link. Examples:
  - Straight link: [www.scorenaples.org](http://www.scorenaples.org)

- Keyword link: [Get Confidential, Free Business Advice at SCORE](#)
- Cross-link your pages to help spread a good PageRank. For example, if page advice.html has a high PageRank, add links from advice.html to other pages in your site as well as link to advice.html from other pages using keyword links.
- Too many external links can negatively affect your PageRank because Google may believe you are a link farm just to get a good PageRank. So, if you have a list of resource links, use a straight link for them to prevent being penalized.
- Using hidden links to boost your PageRank will hurt you.

## TIPS

- Determine what keywords people use to search for your product, then spread these keywords throughout your website content. Some tools to help are (with the paid tools being better):
  - Google Keyword Tool (free, but has no quantitative data) <https://adwords.google.com/select/KeywordToolExternal>
  - Yahoo SM/Overture Keyword Tool (free, but intermittent) <http://inventory.overture.com/d/searchinventory/suggestion>
  - Good Keywords (desktop application, free version at <http://www.goodkeywords.com/products/gkw/> or advanced version (\$97) at <http://www.goodkeywords.com/products/gkwgold/buy.php>)
  - WordTracker (free for 100 keywords, weekly-monthly-yearly subscriptions available for as low as \$24/mo, one of the leading systems in the industry however results are based on a very small section of Search). <http://www.wordtracker.com>
  - Keyword Discovery (free for 100 keywords, as low as \$50/month) <http://www.keyworddiscovery.com>
- Ensure all pertinent pages are indexed (you can create a sitemap to guide Google's robots. See <https://www.google.com/webmasters/tools/docs/en/about.html>)
- Consider a PPC advertising budget (<http://adwords.google.com>) where you pay to be listed, but only pay when someone clicks on your ad and you set the max price per click and the max cost per day. You even have the ability to use demographic information to limit your ads to certain geographic areas.
- Use reporting to make sure your website is useable (e.g. learn where people go and don't go on your website). <http://www.google.com/analytics/>
- Name your web pages using search keywords that describe the content of the page and use dashes in the name rather than underscores. Example: business-advice.html
- Include descriptive page titles for each page using keywords separated by – or | (very important) (<TITLE>Business Advice from SCORE</TITLE>). Limit to 67 characters or less. Include these words in the page content. Only use the company name in the TITLE if absolutely necessary for branding.
- Use an H1 tag for the main topic of the page (and only one H1 tag per page). Try to use keywords in the main topic.
- Use appropriate META tags (DESCRIPTION, KEYWORDS, ROBOT)

- KEYWORDS – limit to 12-15 keywords that describe content on this page. Google doesn't look at this Meta tag, but other engines still do.
- DESCRIPTION – this can affect what is displayed under your link on the SERPs (Search Engine Results Page). Keep under 160 characters and relevant to page content. As this can be displayed on the SERP, use it to *set the hook* to get people to click on the link! Note that Google may also use the data from ODP entry (open directory project) to display on the SERP ([www.dmoz.org](http://www.dmoz.org)), so it might be worth getting your entry right there.
- Name your picture files using appropriate keywords using hyphens between keywords (e.g. custom-jewelry.jpg)
- Use the ALT tag on pictures to find a blend between using keywords as well as being informative (as the ALT tag is to help a visually impaired person 'read' the picture)
- Use on-page styling such as **bold** and *italics* to make keyword points
- Ensure that your pages contain unique content
- You can consider buying a link from a high PageRank site (e.g. they link to you). However, if you do, try to get a keyword link using your best keywords AND buy the link for 6 months to ensure that the results are found by Google.
- Do some searches on your keywords to see who is competing with you on those keywords, then look at their techniques to see why they are higher on the SERP than you.
- Search on **Matt Cutts** (a Google developer that often posts relevant information on improving your ranking).

**PageRank SUMMARY of what matters most:**

- Which websites link to you
- The number of websites that link to you
- The Google rank of the websites that link to you
- The Page Title of the web pages that link to you
- The anchor text (keyword link) used to link to you
- The number of outbound links on the website (to prevent link farms)
- The IP address of sites that link to you (certain IP addresses are known as link farms)